

CONFIDENTIAL.

(5858.)

Slave General

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Memorandum on the bearing of International Law on the Slave Trade.

AT the fifth meeting of the West African Conference at Berlin on the 18th December, 1884, Sir E. Malet handed to the President a proposal respecting the Slave Trade, couched in the following terms :—

“ Following the principles of international law, as they are recognized by the High Contracting Parties, the Slave Trade in negroes and the trade which furnishes negroes for the Slave Trade, are forbidden, and it is the duty of all nations to suppress them as much as possible.”

Sir E. Malet, in support of his motion, then spoke as follows :—

“ The Slave Trade in negroes has been prohibited by civilized Europe by means of—

“ A Declaration of the Congress of Vienna of the 8th February, 1815.

“ The same question was discussed in the Conference of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, and finally—

“ At the Congress of Verona, a Resolution, dated the 28th November, 1822, proclaimed the commerce of African negroes to be culpable and illicit, ‘ a pest which has too long desolated Africa, degraded Europe, and afflicted humanity.’

“ Consequently, the Powers bound themselves to assent in everything which might insure and accelerate the abolition of this commerce.”

The General Act of the Berlin Conference of the 26th February, 1885, contained this additional Declaration :—

“ Article 9. Seeing that trading in slaves is forbidden in conformity with the principles of international law, as recognized by the Signatory Powers, and seeing also that the operations

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which, by sea or land, furnish slaves to trade, ought likewise to be regarded as forbidden, the Powers which do or shall exercise sovereign rights or influence in the territories forming the Conventional Basin of the Congo, declare that these territories may not serve as a market or means of transit for the trade in slaves, of whatever race they may be. Each of the Powers binds itself to employ all the means at its disposal for putting an end to this trade and for punishing those who engage in it."

E. HERTSLET.

November 9, 1889.

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**MEMORANDUM on the bearing of Inter-
national Law on the Slave Trade.**

*Foreign Office,
November 9, 1889.*

Source Citation

Memorandum on the bearing of international law on the slave trade. Vol. 34, [Printed by Harrison and Sons], [1889]. Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive, link.gale.com/apps/doc/GF0103792935/GDCS?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDCS&xid=13f58f78&pg=1. Accessed 1 Mar. 2022.

Gale Document Number:GALE|GF0103792935